

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-13 and 32-40 are pending in this application.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-11, 13 and 32-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,753,085 to FitzPatrick (hereinafter merely "FitzPatrick '085").

Instant claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

"A substrate ... comprising:
a plurality of individual preformed layers and a polymeric coating or impregnating material or rubber material that is part of each of said individual preformed layers,
wherein each individual preformed layer is a textile layer coated/impregnated with resin or the rubber material ..." (Emphasis added)

Accordingly, one embodiment of the instant invention is a substrate including a plurality of individual preformed layers and a polymeric coating or impregnating material or rubber material that is a part of each of these individual preformed layers. Each individual preformed layer is a textile layer coated/impregnated with resin or the rubber material i.e. the individual layers of preformed components are first coated or impregnated with a polymer resin and then combined to form the substrate of a belt for papermaking machine applications.

The properties of the laminated substrate and the requirements of use, such as dewatering as in a shoe press belt or sheet support and uniform pressure distribution in the nip, or ease of transfer of the sheet of paper from one position to another may be predetermined by application of these processes in the case of a transfer belt. In other words, belts having specific

predetermined properties (including different properties on the face and shoe sides or face and back sides of the belt) may be produced by varying the "layers" or structures used in forming the instant substrate.

Paragraphs 0036 and 0042 of the instant application clearly indicate that each layer that makes up the belt is laminated to an adjacent layer. Each preformed layer is a "textile layer" or a textile layer coated/impregnated with resin. The individual layers are first coated/impregnated with a polymer resin and then combined to form the substrate of the belt for papermaking machine applications. The coating/impregnating of the layers of the textile substrate can be carried out by the process described in Fitzpatrick. Each layer has either a coating already, or has a layer of fusible material inserted between layers to allow lamination to take place (paragraphs 0038, 0042). It should also be noted that the instant technique causes complete lamination between adjacent layers (100% coverage). Finally, the laminate could have a further resin coating as disclosed in paragraph 44 of the instant specification.

FitzPatrick '085, on the other hand, discloses a nip press belt having a textile substrate impregnated and coated on at least one side with a polymeric resin material. FitzPatrick '085 does not disclose a multilayer structure as claimed in claim 1. In the Office Action, the Examiner relies upon Fig. 6 and its accompanying disclosure in FitzPatrick '085 to teach the claim limitations. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

FitzPatrick '085, and Fig. 6 specifically, shows three layers of material (e.g. yarns) not woven together. *After* those layers are brought into contact with each other, a *single* coating layer 50 is applied to this entire substrate of layers (See col. 5, lines 38-49 of FitzPatrick '085). FitzPatrick '085 specifically discloses that the transverse continuous fine filaments 46 and longitudinal continuous fine filaments 48 are *not interwoven* with one another, but form a non-

woven matrix. [A] polymeric resin coating 50 is provided on both sides of long nip press belt

44. Applicant respectfully submits that to those of ordinary skill in the art, the single polymeric resin coating 50 in FitzPatrick '085 is clearly different from the *distinct* resin layers of the instant invention i.e. a polymeric coating or impregnating material or rubber material that is part of *each* of said individual preformed layers.

Therefore Applicant submits that FitzPatrick fails to teach or suggest the above discussed feature of claim 1. Specifically, FitzPatrick does not disclose or suggest a substrate comprising a plurality of individual preformed layers and a polymeric coating or impregnating material or rubber material that is a part of each of these individual preformed layers, wherein each individual preformed layer is a textile layer coated/impregnated with resin or the rubber material, as recited in instant claim 1.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentably distinguished over FitzPatrick, and therefore is allowable. Since independent claim 32 is similar or somewhat similar in scope to claim 1, it is also allowable for similar reasons.

III. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

Claims 2-13 and 33-40 in this application are each dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In the event that the Examiner disagrees with any of the above arguments, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the respective reference providing the basis for a contrary view.

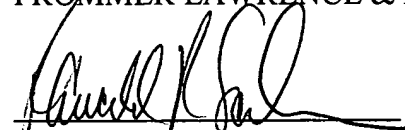
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, all of the claims in this application are patentable over the prior art, and an early and favorable consideration thereof is solicited.

Please charge any fees incurred by reason of this response and not paid herewith to
Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,
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